



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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May 26 2005

EVENT: Conviction

DEFENDANT: Jason Hawthorne

**AFTER FOUR YEARS AS A FUGITIVE, DEFENDANT CONVICTED
OF FELON IN POSSESSION OF A FIREARM**

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today that Jason Hawthorne, a 27-year-old resident of Detroit, Michigan, was found guilty on Tuesday, May 24, 2005, by a federal jury in Detroit on charges of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

The verdict was announced after the jury deliberated for approximately 20 minutes, concluding a two-day trial held before United States District Court Judge Robert H. Cleland.

The evidence presented at the two day trial showed that on March 12, 2000, in the vicinity of Thatcher and Lauder in Detroit, police officers on routine patrol within Detroit's 8th Precinct, heard gunfire and shortly thereafter observed a vehicle the defendant was riding in traveling without headlights. The officers stopped the vehicle and observed the defendant make suspicious movements in the area of the front passenger's seat, where he was seated. The officers recovered a loaded and operable Smith & Wesson 9mm semi-automatic pistol with five live rounds in the magazine from under the front passenger's seat. Fully loaded, the magazine holds nine rounds.

From April 2000, to September 2004, the defendant was a fugitive who utilized a false identity to evade law enforcement. He was ultimately arrested after giving a false name to officers in the 12th Precinct on September 27, 2004. Subsequent investigation revealed the defendant's true identity and the federal arrest warrant.

"This case clearly demonstrates the outstanding cooperative relationship between the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the Detroit Police Department, and the United States Attorney's Office. It also shows the commitment of federal and local authorities in vigorously prosecuting persons that illegally possess guns in the City of Detroit," stated United States Attorney Murphy. Murphy also noted that, " my office is firmly committed to working with federal, state, and local agencies to aggressively prosecute felons who continue to break the law with illegal guns."

United States Attorney Murphy also praised the work of investigators, officers, and special agents from the Detroit Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms for their diligence in investigating the initial incident and tracking down the defendant so he could be held accountable at trial. Assistant United States Attorney John Freeman prosecuted the case.

Sentencing of Mr. Hawthorne is scheduled for August 23, 2005.